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Vraja-prema in the Bhagavad-gita





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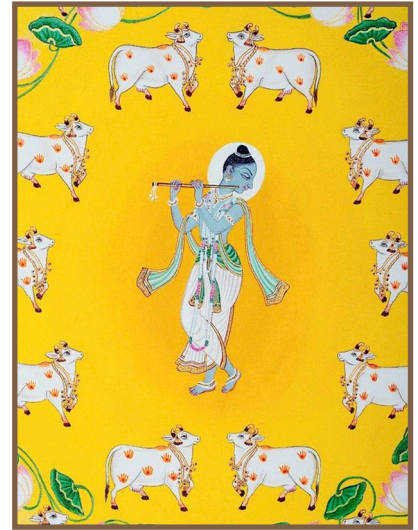
Srila Vishwanath Chakravarti Thakur

- **VRAJA PREMA IN THE GITA**

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- **STORY OF THE GITA PANDA**

Bhurijana Das



DRINKING THE MILK OF THE GITA



Sripad Shankaracharya's Gīta-dhyāna (Text 4)

Translation and commentary by

His Divine Grace A.C.

Bhaktivedanta Swami Prabhupada

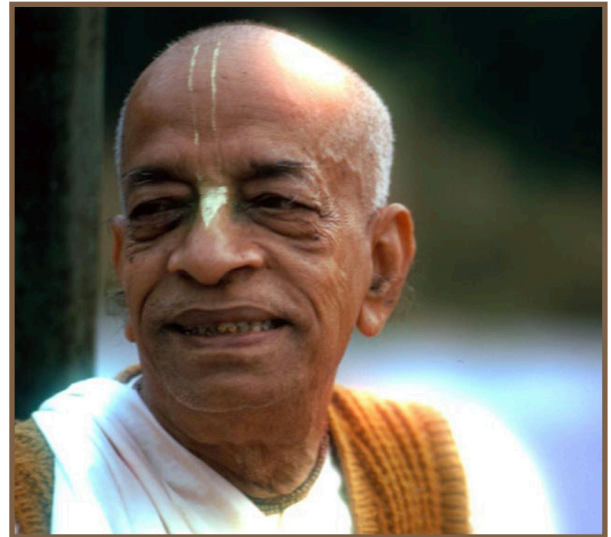
Versification by Hayagriva Das Adhikari

sarvopaniṣado gāvo dogdhā gopāla nandanah

pārtho vatsah sudhir bhoktā dugdham gītāmṛtaṁ mahat

The Upanishads

Are as a herd of cows,



Cover: "Gita Upadesh". Unknown artist.



Unknown artist

The Bhagavad-gītā is like a cow that Krishna is milking. Arjuna is the calf, and the listeners drink the milk of the Gita

Lord Krishna, son of a cowherd,
Is their milker,
Arjun is the calf,
The supreme nectar of the Gītā
Is the milk,
And the wise man
Of purified intellect
Is the drinker.

PURPORT: Unless one understands spiritual variegatedness, one cannot understand the transcendental pastimes of the Lord. In the *Brahma-saṁhitā* it is said that Krishna's name, form, quality, pastimes, entourage and paraphernalia are all *ānanda-cinmaya-rasa* — in short, everything of his transcendental association is of the same composition of spiritual bliss, knowledge and eternity. There is no end to his name, form, etc., unlike the material world where all things have their end. As stated in the *Bhagavad-gītā*, only fools deride him,

whereas it is Shankar, the greatest impersonalist, who worships him, his cows, and his pastimes as the son of Vasudev and pleasure of Devaki. 🍊

Bibliography

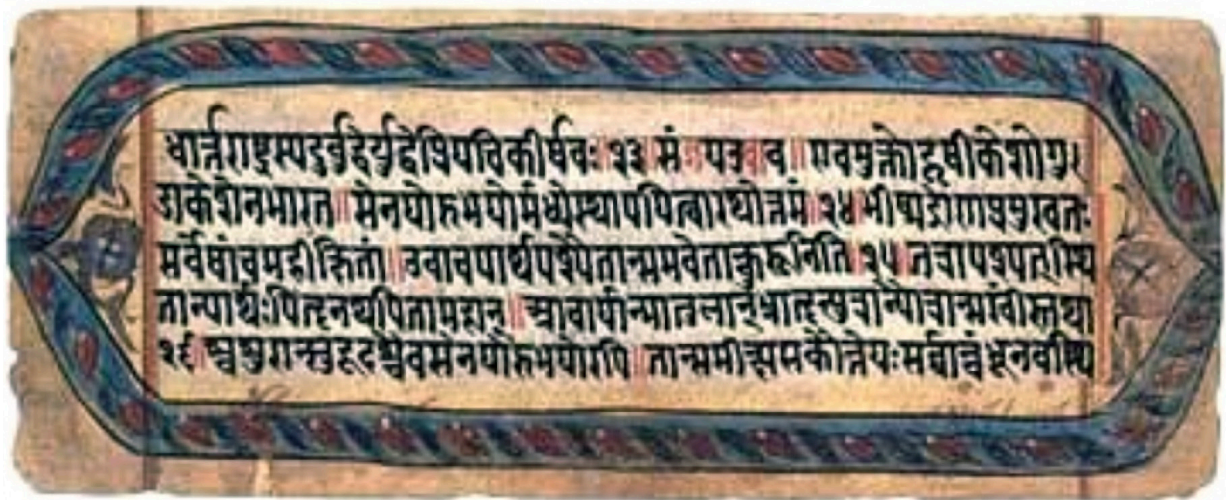
- Authorized Purports on Śrīpāda Śaṅkarācārya's Meditation on the *Bhagavad-gītā*", *Back To Godhead* magazine, number 40.
- Sanskrit for the above verses from *Śrīmad Bhagavad Gītā*. Published by Sri Chaitanya Saraswat Gaudiya Math. Mayapur. 1987. Bengali.

Early Classes on the Gita



From the life of Srila Prabhupada

My gurudeva [Srila Bhakti Rakshak Sridhar Maharaja] told me that when he was not there I should go to the class of Swamiji every day to study *Gītā*. At that time, he was translating in consultation with the commentaries of Sri Baladev Vidyabhushan, Srila Vishwanath Chakravarti Thakur, and Srila Sridhar Swami. He was writing *As It Is*. Every evening



Unknown photographer

Pages from a 19th century handwritten copy of the Gītā

he wrote new pages and then in the morning he explained those verses to me. My gurudeva said that this would be very good for me, and good for him also to help me. He would get a student and I would get a master. He gave the classes in Bengali because I could not read any English at that time. His special target then was to demolish the *māyāvādīs*. He showed how *Gītā* gives the transcendental eternal pastimes of Krishna, and that the Brahman effulgence is not the aim of life. 🍌

— Remembrance of Srila Bhakti Sundar Govinda Dev Maharaja. From *Mulaprakṛiti Dasi's, Our Srila Prabhupāda, a Friend to All*. Copyright 2013 by Gopavṛindapal Das.

WE COULD DO MANY GITAS

From the life of Srila Prabhupada

Pradyumna Das: Prabhupada always considered that four books — the *Bhagavad-gītā*, *Śrīmad*

Bhāgavatam, *The Nectar of Devotion*, and *Śrī Caitanya-caritāmṛta* — were the necessary books. Outside of that, everything was extra. Once we were in Prabhupada's room in New York when Radhaballabha asked Prabhupada, “So, after you finish the *Bhāgavatam*, Prabhupada, what books would you like to translate?” Prabhupada said, “Oh, maybe Jiva Goswami's *Sat Sandharbha*, or *Vedānta-sūtra*, or *Bhagavad-gītā*. There are so many.” Someone spoke up, “But Prabhupada, you already did the *Bhagavad-gītā*.” Prabhupada said, “There are so many commentaries. We did a small part.” He said, “Ramanujacharya, Madhvacharya, everyone has given a *Gītā* commentary. We could do many *Gītās*, not just one.” So he had a conception like that. 🍌

— From a remembrance of Pradyumna Das. *Srila Prabhupāda — Remembrances, Anecdotes of a Modern-Day Saint*, volume 2, chapter 16. Siddhanta Das. ITV.





Scene from the battle of Kurukshetra from a handwritten copy of the Mahābhārata

THREE EDITIONS OF GITA PUBLISHED BY SRILA THAKUR BHAKTIVINODE

In 1886 Srila Thakur Bhaktivinode printed a version of Bhagavad-gītā that he edited and that included the Sanskrit commentary of Srila Vishwanath Chakravarti Thakur entitled *Sārārtha-varṣiṇī*. The book included Bhaktivinode's elaborate introduction in Bengali, and for each Sanskrit verse of the *Gītā*, he composed his own Bengali translation-commentary entitled *Rasika-rañjana*. In 1891, Bhaktivinode edited and published another edition that included Srila Baladev Vidyabhushana's Sanskrit commentary called *Gītā-bhūṣaṇa*, along with Bhaktivinode's Bengali translation-commentary called *Vidvad-rañjana*. Then again in 1898 Bhaktivinode published an edition that included the Sanskrit commentary known as *Dvaita-bhāṣyam* by Srila Madhvacharya.

— From *A Bibliography of the Literary Works of Srila Thakur Bhaktivinoda 1838-1914*, compiled by Dasarath Suta Das. Nectar Books. Union City, Georgia USA.

REFLECTIONS ON THE BHAGAVAD-GITA

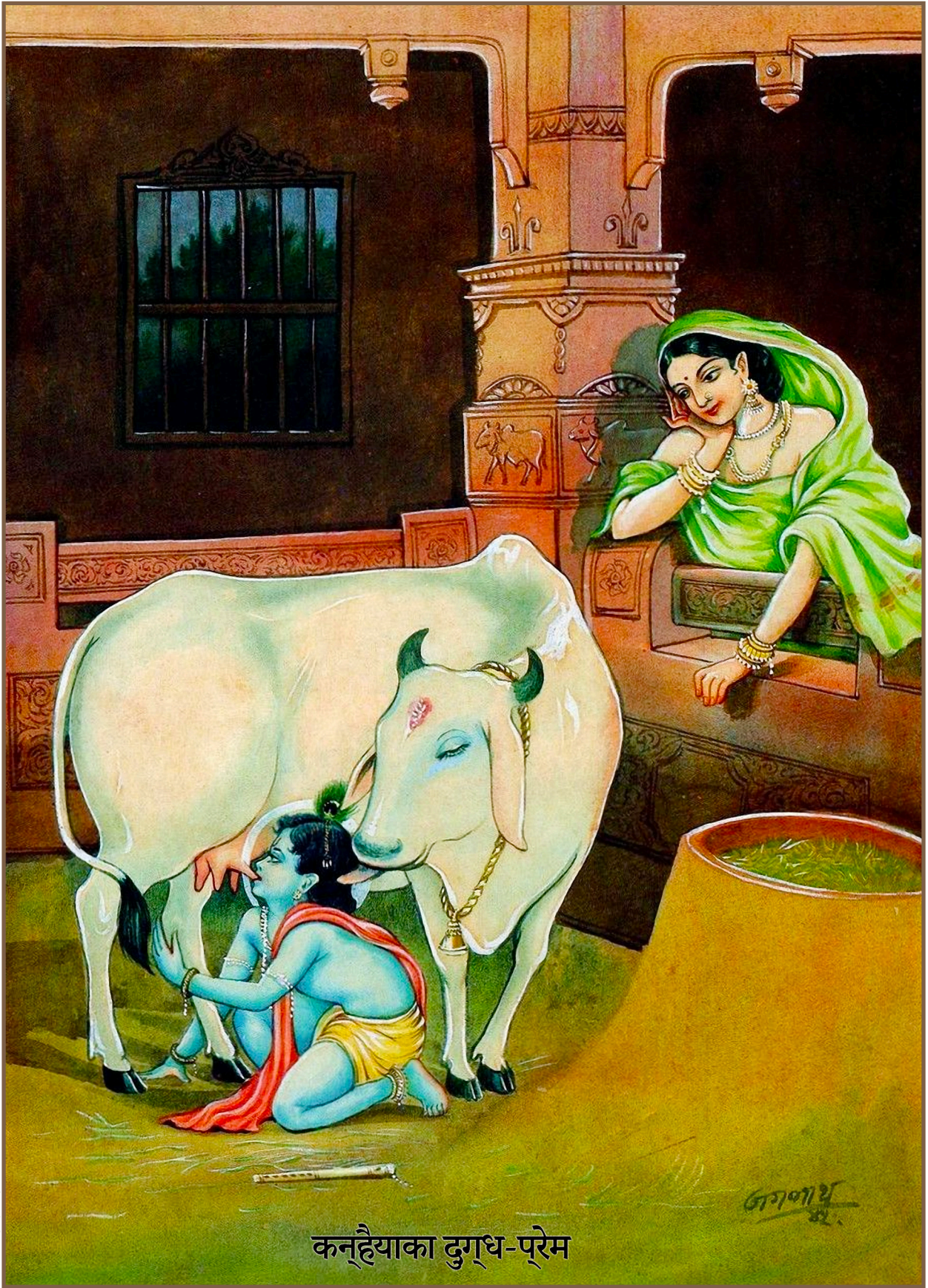


Srila Thakur Bhaktivinode

Bhagavad-gītā consists of eighteen chapters. Among them, the first six chapters deal with *karma*, the second six deal with *bhakti*, and the last six deal with *jñāna*. The supremacy of devotional service has been established in this book. Devotional service is most confidential, but it is the life of *jñāna* and *karma*. Since it awards one the goal of life, devotional service has been placed in the middle six chapters. (*Bhagavad-gītā* introduction)

Bhagavad-gītā instructs that the ultimate goal for the living entities is pure devotional service alone. Surrendering to the Supreme Lord, the most confidential instruction, is found in the concluding verses of *Bhagavad-gītā*, beginning with *sarva-dharmān parityajya*. (*Bhagavad-gītā* introduction)

Arjuna's fighting is an example of attachment to one's occupational duties. Fighting is not the conclusion of *Bhagavad-gītā*. (*Bhagavad-gītā* introduction)



kanhaiyākā dugdha-prema
"Kanhaiya's (Krishna's) love for milk"

The confidential purport of *Bhagavad-gītā* is that according to a person's nature his qualification is determined. He should only engage in activities that are necessary to maintain his livelihood and that are prescribed according to his qualification, and he should search after the Absolute Truth. His perfection lies in doing so. (*Bhagavad-gītā* introduction)

Śrīmad Bhagavad-gītā is the essence of all scriptures. For one who has not received the nectarean instructions of *Bhagavad-gītā*, studying other scriptures is like an ass carrying a big burden. (*Sajjana-toṣaṇī* 12/2)

Unfortunately, the commentaries and Bengali translations of *Śrīmad Bhagavad-gītā* that have been published to date are mostly composed by monists. Commentaries or translations based on pure devotional service are rarely published. The commentaries of Shankaracharya and Anandagiri are full of monistic conclusions. Sridhar Swami's commentary is not based on the philosophy of monism, but it has a scent of the sectarian philosophy of *śuddhādvaita-vāda*. Sri Madhusudana Saraswati's commentary is full of statements nourishing devotional service, but the conclusion is not beneficial. Sri Ramanuja Swami's commentary is fully based on devotional service, but unless a commentary on *Bhagavad-gītā* that is full of the teachings of Sri Gauranga Mahāprabhu's *acintya-bhedābheda* philosophy is published in our country, the happiness of those who relish pure devotional service will not increase.

We have therefore carefully published the *Bhagavad-gītā* with the Bengali translation called *Rasika-rañjana* according to the commentary written by Sri Vishwanath Chakravartī Thakur. He was a follower of Sri Gauranga, a great teacher, and the crest jewel among all devotees. Sri Baladev Vidyabhushan also wrote a commentary on *Bhagavad-gītā* based on the teachings of Srīman Mahāprabhu. Although Baladev's commentary is philosophical, Chakravartī Mahāsaya's commentary is not only philosophical, but also full of the mellows of love of God. Particularly, Chakravartī Mahāsaya's commentary on *Śrīmad Bhāgavatam* is particularly well known and respected. Chakravartī Mahāsaya's philosophy is simple and his Sanskrit language is sublime. (*Bhagavad-gītā* translation) 🍊

— Excerpted from, *Śrī Bhaktivinoda Vāñī Vaibhava*. Compiled by and with questions from Sri Sundarananda Vidyavinode. Translated by Sri Bhūmipatī Das. Published by Sri Iswara Das and Touchstone Media. Vrindavan. 2002.

The Position of Bhagavad-gītā and Other Literatures



The following is excerpted from the book, *Śrī Bhaktisiddhānta Vaibhava* by Bhakti Vikasa Swami. The indented quotes are from Srila Bhaktisiddhanta while the comments are from Bhakti Vikasa Swami.

Śrīmad Bhagavad-gītā is the first book to be read by persons on the spiritual trail. *Śrī Bhagavad-gītā* and *Śrīmad Bhāgavatam* are the crest jewels of all scriptures. They are as great and worth taking refuge of as is Sri Krishna himself and are transcendental manifestations of *kṛṣṇa-kīrtana*.

Srila Saraswati Thakur did not advocate that all should undertake study of *Bhagavad-gītā* and *Śrīmad Bhāgavatam*, for these are intricate philosophical works in Sanskrit, difficult to understand except by those of scholarly disposition. *Bhagavad-gītā* is generally considered meant for guiding those within *varṇāśrama* — *karmīs*, *jñānīs*, and *yogīs* — toward the path of devotion. And although introductory to the detailed spiritual knowledge of *Śrīmad Bhāgavatam*, the *Bhagavad-gītā* is itself quite complex, expounding such subjects as various factors of action, diverse energies of the Supreme Lord and their interactions, and intricacies and relative roles of *karma*, *jñāna*, *yoga*, and *bhakti*. Srila Saraswati Thakur advised devotees to especially peruse the sections of *Śrīmad Bhāgavatam* on Dhruva Maharaja and Prahlād Maharaja and also Kapila-deva's instructions. And he recommended *Kṛṣṇa-prema-taraṅgiṇī*, a Bengali verse adaptation of *Śrīmad Bhāgavatam* by Sri Raghunath Bhagavatacharya, a disciple of Sri Gadadhar Pandit. But he warned that unless read in the original Sanskrit, weighty philosophical works such as *Govinda-bhāṣya* [Srila Baladev Vidyabhushan's commentary on *Vedānta-sūtra*] are often not accurately grasped and cannot be properly appreciated unless studied under the guidance of a *vaiṣṇava ācārya*.

Srila Bhaktisiddhanta Saraswati stated that the *Upaniṣads* and *Gītā* were for the “infant class” and that it was necessary to progress further to the study of *Śrīmad Bhāgavatam*. This was not in denigration of the *Upaniṣads* or the *Gītā*, both of which he often quoted, but to illumine the unique position of *Śrīmad Bhāgavatam*:

Śrīmad Bhāgavatam propagates the impartial absolute truth. It is the most desirable object for



Illustration from a 19th century handwritten Gītā, showing part of chapter 1 text 20

non-envious devotees. *Śrīmad Bhagavad-gītā* is curriculum for the infant class, whereas *Śrīmad Bhāgavatam* is for postgraduates. To qualify for the postgraduate course, those who know nothing about spiritual life use *Bhagavad-gītā* as the entrance exam. Persons desiring to attain a masters or doctorate degree in spiritual subject matter are required to study further.

Nonetheless, objective devotees do not discriminate between *Śrīmad Bhagavad-gītā* and *Śrīmad Bhāgavatam*. The variety of adjectives and grammatical explanations found in this world become beautiful at the lotus feet of *Śrīmad Bhāgavatam*. *Śrīmad Bhāgavatam* expounds the constitutional duty of the spirit soul and is directly an *avatāra* of Bhagavān. No one can shake *Śrīmad Bhāgavatam* even a hairsbreadth from its unique position.

Śrīmad Bhagavad-gītā is recommended for the infant class in the spiritual school as well as for new students who desire to enter the spiritual kingdom. Those who have become qualified by studying *Bhagavad-gītā* and wish to attain higher spiritual knowledge can gain immense profit by properly hearing and studying *Śrīmad Bhāgavatam* under a *mahābhāgavata*.

Śrīmad Bhāgavatam is directly the *avatāra* of the Absolute Truth, not to be measured by our blunt material senses. Whatever is rare and confidential is well protected. *Śrīmad Bhāgavatam* does not reveal Himself to godless people.

And he further extolled *Śrīmad Bhāgavatam*:

If all the books in the universe were burned to ashes, there would be no loss if only one scripture remained: *Śrīmad Bhāgavatam*. If millions of centers of education disappear, there is no loss if teaching and learning the *Bhāgavatam* continues.

Srila Bhaktisiddhanta Saraswati often advised Bengalis and Odias, most of whom had at least sentimental faith in Chaitanya Mahaprabhu and rudimentary acquaintance with *vaiṣṇava* philosophy, to first study *Śrī Caitanya-bhāgavata* and *Śrī Caitanya-caritāmṛta*, which although composed in simple Bengali verse, contain the essence of all scriptural conclusions and can immediately invoke the mellifluous *bhakti-rasa* offered by Lord Chaitanya. He directed beginners to first go through the relatively uncomplicated *Śrī Caitanya-bhāgavata*, then the more philosophically intricate *Śrī Caitanya-caritāmṛta*, and only thereafter *Śrīmad Bhāgavatam*. He often told his followers to “from time to time” read *Śrī Caitanya-bhāgavata*, and he would ask Bengalis who had come to see him if they had read it. He would quote the fact of Srila Bhaktivinoda Thakur’s having stressed the importance of reading *Śrī Caitanya-bhāgavata* — how even



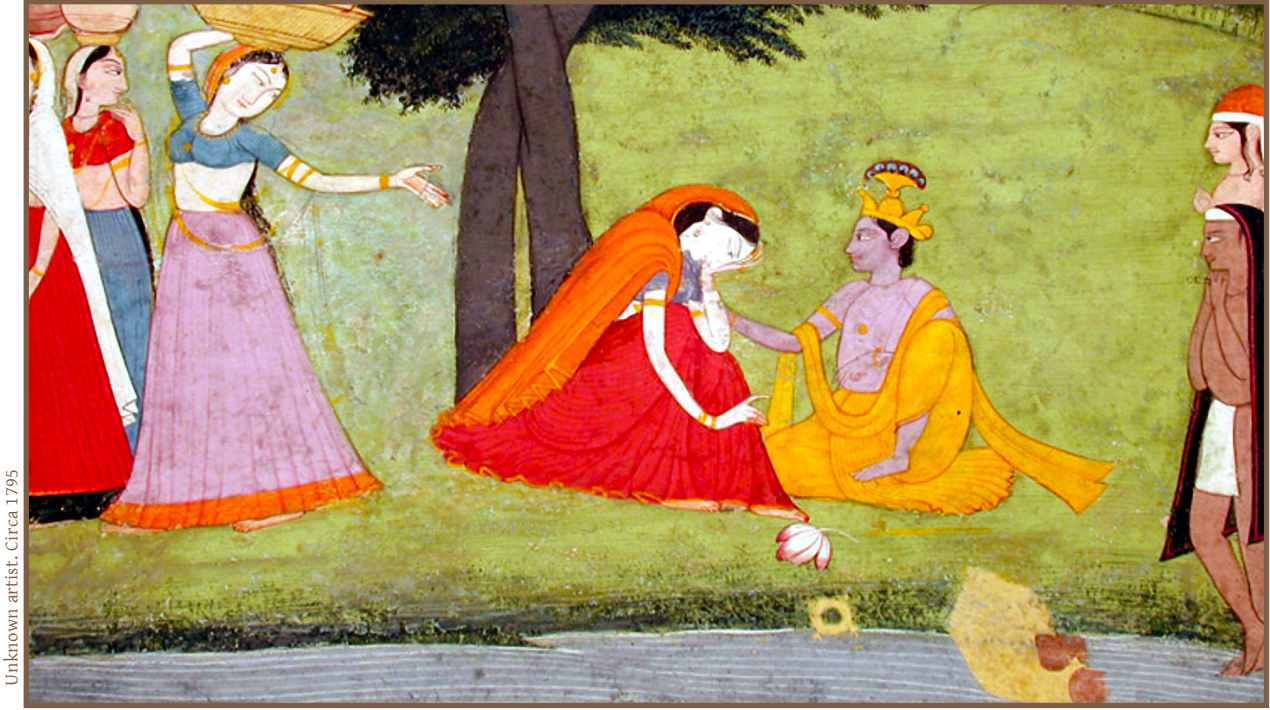
Unknown artist

In the eleventh chapter of the Gītā, Krishna showed Arjuna his universal form

without reading Śrī Caitanya-caritāmṛta one could gain through Śrī Caitanya-bhāgavata all essential truths of śuddha-bhakti.

Srila Saraswati Thakur once commented, “I am averse to serving the Lord. I only know philosophical analysis. Śrī Caitanya-bhāgavata

largely describes līlā. Yet in writing a commentary on it, my tendency toward philosophical judgment has come out.” Indeed, his commentary revealed many deep philosophical insights underlying the simply presented narrations in Śrī Caitanya-bhāgavata.



The main subject of Śrīmad Bhāgavatam is Krishna's pastimes with the Vraja-gopīs

He would instruct educated non-Bengali disciples to learn Bengali for studying the original texts of *Śrī Caitanya-bhāgavata*, *Śrī Caitanya-caritāmṛta*, other essential Gaudīya Vaiṣṇava works, and also Gaudīya articles. He often said that a time would come when foreigners would learn Bengali just to read *Śrī Caitanya-caritāmṛta*.

Śrī Caitanya-caritāmṛta was Srila Bhaktisiddhanta Saraswati's favorite book. He regarded it as a matchless devotional work and the most important biography of Chaitanya Mahāprabhu, because it succinctly yet definitively imparts his teachings and gives significantly more insights into the nature of the Lord's highest ecstasies than do *Śrī Caitanya-bhāgavata* or other narratives. Srila Bhaktisiddhanta Saraswati himself read both *Śrī Caitanya-caritāmṛta* and *Śrī Caitanya-bhāgavata* 108 times and told others to do likewise. Especially in his later life, whenever he got time he generally read *Śrī Caitanya-caritāmṛta*. And he explicated the glories of and essential connection between *Śrīmad Bhāgavatam* and *Śrī Caitanya-caritāmṛta*:

There is no other book in the universe like *Śrīmad Bhāgavatam*. This is not mere tittle-tattle or an amplified homage. An objective judge will realize that there has not been any book like the *Bhāgavatam*, nor will there ever be one. This book

presents a consideration of gradual evolution, from the increasingly better conceptions of skepticism, atheism, attributelessness, neuterdom, masculinity, copulation, consorhood by marriage (*svakīya*), and lastly paramour love of the gopīs (*parakīya*). *Kṛṣṇa-līlā* is described in the Tenth Canto. What then was the necessity of composing the preceding nine cantos? In them have been shown the deliberation of these theories, to prepare the ground for introducing the main subject, namely the description of Krishna's transcendental pastimes with the *Vraja-gopīs*, as given in the "*Gopī-gīta*" and similar sections of the Tenth Canto.

There were many who read *Śrīmad Bhāgavatam* before Sri Chaitanya Mahāprabhu came into this world, but the only ones who have been able to seize the real import and actual object of the *Śrīmad Bhāgavatam* are they who read it after reading *Śrī Caitanya-caritāmṛta* of Sri Krishnadas Kaviraj Goswami, one of his chief followers in the line of Sri Rupa Goswami — in other words, those who have read *Śrīmad Bhāgavatam* within *Śrī Caitanya-caritāmṛta*. *Prākṛta-sahajiyās* read *Śrīmad Bhāgavatam* and mercenary discourses explain it, yet they only misconstrue and cover the true reading according to the version of *Śrī Caitanya-caritāmṛta*. Their elucidation may please the minds of their hearers, but it merely makes the path to hell more easily accessible for themselves and their admirers.

Some persons claiming to be Gaudīyas study the Sanskrit writings of the Six Goswamis but not Srila Krishnadāsa Kavirāja's *Śrī Caitanya-caritāmṛta*, considering it inferior due to being composed in Bengali. Yet *Śrī Caitanya-caritāmṛta* is the definitive work containing the essence of the *siddhāntas* of the Six Goswamis. Thus, however learned and expert in Sanskrit a scholar may be, without attaining eligibility for studying *Śrī Caitanya-caritāmṛta*, he cannot grasp the message of the Six Goswamis.

While Srila Bhaktisiddhanta Saraswati was once glorifying the superlative character of *Śrī Caitanya-caritāmṛta* to his disciples, he instructed them:

If somehow all the books in the world were destroyed, leaving only *Śrīmad Bhāgavatam* and *Śrī Caitanya-caritāmṛta*, the people of this world could still achieve the ultimate goal of life. Even if *Śrīmad Bhāgavatam* were lost, leaving only *Śrī Caitanya-caritāmṛta*, there would be no loss to humanity, for whatever has not been revealed in the *Bhāgavatam* is found in *Śrī Caitanya-caritāmṛta*. The Absolute Truth is Sri Chaitanya Mahāprabhu, the combined form of Radha and Krishna. *Śrī Caitanya-caritāmṛta* is his sound incarnation, within which is found the divine mystery of Radharani's divine status and glories. Therefore, can there be any doubt concerning the supreme status of this transcendental literature?

As he stood up after ending a lecture in Munger, an earth tremor caused the adjacent Ganga to overflow. The water soon receded, after which Srila Saraswati Thakur said:

“In due course, *mahā-pralaya* (devastating floods) will inundate the entire universe. If you attempt to survive by swimming in that deluge, then do not neglect to take hold of *Bhagavad-gītā*, *Śrīmad Bhāgavatam*, and *Śrī Caitanya-caritāmṛta*. Or if you cannot hold all three, then release *Bhagavad-gītā*. If necessary you may also relinquish *Śrīmad Bhāgavatam*, but under no circumstances release your hold on *Śrī Caitanya-caritāmṛta*.”

श्रीकृष्णकथामृत बिन्दु

In due course, *mahā-pralaya* (devastating floods) will inundate the entire universe. If you attempt to survive by swimming in that deluge, then do not neglect to take hold of *Bhagavad-gītā*, *Śrīmad Bhāgavatam*, and *Śrī Caitanya-caritāmṛta*. Or if you cannot hold all three, then release *Bhagavad-gītā*. If necessary you may also relinquish *Śrīmad Bhāgavatam*, but under no circumstances release your hold on *Śrī Caitanya-caritāmṛta*, for if this one book remains then the flood can do no actual damage, because after it has subsided, the message of *śāstra* can be revived from *Śrī Caitanya-caritāmṛta* alone, it being the essence of all *śāstras*. 🍌

— Bhakti Vikasa Swami. *Śrī Bhaktisiddhānta Vaibhava*. Bhakti Vikasa Trust. Surat, India. 2009.

THE GITA ESTABLISHES
THAT THE FORM OF
KRISHNA IS SUPREME



Srila Vishwanath Chakravarti Thakur's
Commentary on *Bhagavad-gītā* 15.18

*yasmāt kṣaram atīto 'ham akṣarād api cottamaḥ
ato 'smi loke vede ca prathitaḥ puruṣottamaḥ*

Because I am superior to the *jīvas*, to the *brahman*, and to the *puruṣa* known as *paramātmā*, and even to the other forms of *bhagavān*, I am celebrated in the Vedas and the *smṛtis* as the Supreme Person.

Commentary: Having spoken about the object of worship of the *yogīs*, *paramātmā*, the Lord now speaks about the object of worship of the devotees, *bhagavān*. Though he in his form as Krishna is also *bhagavān*,



Painting by Sheetal Banerjee, Circa 1930

Among the forms of bhagavān, Krishna is the supremely attractive

he denotes the supreme excellence of his own svarūpa as Krishna by using the designation *puruṣottama*.

I am superior to the *jīva* (*kṣaram*), and I am superior to the *brahman* (*akṣarāt*), and also to *paramātmā* (the last statement is indicated by the word *api*.)

*yoginām api sarveṣāṁ mad-gaṇāntar-ātmanā
śraddhāvān bhajate yo mām sa me yuktatamo mataḥ*

Of all *yogīs*, he who, absorbing his mind in me, worships me with faith, is considered by me to be the best *yogī*. (Bg. 6.47)

From the difference in the worshiper, one can conclude that there is a difference in the worshipable object. The word *ca* indicates that Krishna is superior even to the Lord of Vaikuntha and other forms of *bhagavān*, as Shukadev has explained in the *Bhāgavatam*:

ete cāmśa-kalāḥ puṁsaḥ kṛṣṇas tu bhagavān svayam

These are all parts or parts of parts. Krishna is *Bhagavān* himself. (Bhāg. 1.3.28)

Though his one *sat-cid-ānanda* form is called by the names *brahman*, *paramātmā* and *bhagavān*, actually there is no difference at all between them. *Svarūpa-dvayābhāvāt* — “There is no duality in your form.” (Bhāg. 6.9. 36) However, because of observing difference in the worshipers, in terms of *sādhana* and the results, difference has been designated. That is to say, the *sādhana* respectively of the *jñānī*, *yogī* and *bhakta* produces realization of *brahman*, *paramātmā* and *bhagavān*. The result of *jñāna* and *yoga* is mere liberation, and the result of *bhakti* is to become an associate of the Lord with *prema*. Also, without *bhakti*, the *jñānī* and the *yogī* do not even attain liberation. This is understood from the following verses:

naiṣkarmyam apy acyuta-bhāva-varjitam na śobhate

Knowledge of self-realization, even though free from all material affinity, does not look well if devoid of a conception of the infallible God. (Bhāg. 1.5.12)

*pureha bhūman bahavo ‘pi yoginas
tvad-arpitahā nija-karma-labdhaḥ
vibudhya bhaktyaiva kathopanītayā
prapedire ‘ñjo ‘cyuta te gatiṁ parām*

O almighty Lord, in the past many *yogīs* in this world achieved the platform of devotional service by offering all their endeavors unto you and faithfully carrying out their prescribed duties. Through such devotional service, perfected by the processes of hearing and chanting about you, they came to understand you,

“The worshipers of *brahman* and *paramātmā* must necessarily perform *bhakti* to *bhagavān* in order to achieve the final results of their *sādhana*. The worshipers of *bhagavān*, however, do not perform worship of *brahman* or *paramātmā* to achieve the results of their *sādhana*.”

O infallible one, and could easily surrender to you and achieve your supreme abode. (Bhāg. 10.14.5)

The worshipers of *brahman* and *paramātmā* must necessarily perform *bhakti* to *bhagavān* in order to achieve the final results of their *sādhana*. The worshipers of *bhagavān*, however, do not need to perform worship of *brahman* or *paramātmā* to achieve the results of their *sādhana*.

*tasmān mad-bhakti-yuktasya yogino vai mad-ātmanah
na jñānam na ca vairāgyam prāyaḥ śreyo bhaved iha*

Therefore, for a devotee engaged in my loving service, with mind fixed on me, the cultivation of knowledge and renunciation is generally not the means of achieving the highest perfection within this world. (Bhāg. 11.20.31)

*yat karmabhir yat tapasā jñāna-vairāgyataś ca yat
yogena dāna-dharmaṇa śreyobhir itarair api
sarvaṁ mad-bhakti-yogena mad-bhaktō labhate ‘ñjasā
svargāpavargaṁ mad-dhāma kathaṁcid yadi vāñchati*

Everything that can be achieved by fruitive activities, penance, knowledge, detachment, mystic yoga, charity, religious duties, and all other means of perfecting life are easily achieved by my devotee through loving service unto me. If somehow or other my devotee desires promotion to heaven, liberation, or residence in my abode, he easily achieves such benedictions. (Bhāg. 1.20.31-32)

*yā vai sādhana-sampattiḥ puruṣārtha-catustaye
tayā vinā tad āpnoti naro nārāyaṇāśrayaḥ*

VRAJA PREMA IN THE GITA



Sri Srimad Gour Govinda Swami Maharaja

Even without the usual requirements for achieving the perfection of life, a person will gain that perfection if he is simply a surrendered devotee of Narayan [from the *Nārāyaṇīya*, of the *Mokṣa-dharma* section of *Mahābhārata*]. Therefore, by the worship of *bhagavān* it is possible to attain all of the results: material enjoyment, liberation and *prema*. But by the worship of *brahman* and *paramātmā* alone it is not possible to attain *prema* and higher stages. Therefore, it is said that *bhagavān* is in a superior position even though he is not different from *brahman* and *paramātmā*. It is just like a huge fire which is considered superior to a small light, because of its superior ability to alleviate the pain of cold.

However, among the forms of *bhagavān*, Krishna is considered to be the supreme attractive form, just as the sun is considered superior to the huge fire. Why? Because Krishna alone gives *nirvāṇa-mokṣa*, the final fruit of worship of *brahman*, to his enemies such as Agha, Baka and Jarasandha, who were most sinful. This verse has been explained according to Sridhar Swami's commentary on the verse *brahmaṇo hi pratiṣṭhāham*. 🍌

— Vishwanath Chakravarti Thakur. *Śrīmad Bhagavad-gītā. With the Sārārtha-varṣīni commentary*. English translation by Bhanu Swami. Parampara Publishers. Chennai, India. 2003.

Krishna is known as *līlā puruṣottama*; he manifests all varieties of *līlās*. He came 5,000 years ago in his own *svarūpa*. At the end, in his *kurukṣetra-līlā*, he gave his message in the form of *Bhagavad-gītā*. He spoke it to Arjuna. We should not think that he only gave it to Arjuna. Through Arjuna he gave this knowledge, this message, to the whole of mankind. We call this *śākhā-candra-nyāya*. *Nyāya* means “logic”, *śākhā* means “branch of the tree” and *candra* means “moon”. The branch and the moon logic. The child cries, so what does the mother do? The mother says, “Don’t you see the moon there, very effulgent silver plate? Don’t you want to have it?”

Then the child says, “Yes, mother, where is it? Where is it?” “Don’t you see it? It is in the sky.” The full moon looks like an effulgent silver plate. Very beautiful, but it cannot be seen because the branches of some tree are obstructing the vision. It is just at the opening of some branches, but the child cannot see it. “Where is it, where is it, where is it, mother?”



Unknown artist. Delhi Agra area. Circa 1520-1540

Bhimasena killed Jarasandha on the order of Krishna

Unknown artist. Pahari, Himachal Pradesh, India, late 18th century



śākhā-candra-nyāya — by pointing out the tree's branch the mother shows the moon to the child

“Look at this tree. Look at that big branch there!” She is pointing out the tree’s branch and thus the mother shows the moon. This is the logic *śākhā-candra-nyāya*. By pointing out the tree’s branch the mother shows the moon to the child. Similarly, pointing out to Arjuna, Krishna shows everything to mankind. This is *śākhā-candra-nyāya*.

Most Confidential

Krishna gave his message to us because he is the only well-wishing friend of all living entities. He gave his message in the form of *Bhagavad-gītā* through Arjuna to all of mankind. He gave confidential instructions, more confidential instructions, and the most confidential instruction. The most confidential instruction is *man-manā bhava mad-bhakto mad-yājī māṁ namaskuru*, and *sarva-dharmān parityajya mām ekaṁ śaraṇaṁ vraja* [Bg. 18.65-66]. This is his most confidential instruction. “Think of me always. Become my *bhakta* — my devotee, and my servant. Engage in my service.” Krishna says this because he is the *sevyā-vastu*. He is to be served and everyone is his servant, *sevaka*. *ekale īśvara kṛṣṇa, āra saba bhr̥tya* [Cc. ādi 5.142]: “The only one to be served is the Supreme Lord Sri Krishna, Parameswar. All others, other than Krishna, are servants — *bhr̥tya*.” Only Krishna is to be served, he is the *sevyā-vastu*. Therefore, he says, *mad-bhakto*, “Become my *bhakta* and engage in my service.” So, have you become a servant of Krishna? No! *māyāra naphara hañā cira-dina bule* — You are wandering in this material world, having become a servant of *māyā*. [Jagadananda Pandit’s *Prema-vivarta* 5.4] We have not become servants of Krishna, rather, we have become servants of *māyā*. *Naphara* means “servant”. From time immemorial the *jīva* has been wandering in this material world, having become a servant of *māyā*. We have not become servants of Krishna. Krishna is our well-wishing friend, and therefore he says, “Become my servant!” because he is to be served, whereas all others are servants. *man-manā bhava mad-bhakto mad-yājī*, “Worship me!” The only worshipable deity is Krishna. *mām-namaskuru*, “Pay your obeisances unto me, then you will come to me!” That is the goal of life, to approach the lotus feet of Krishna, to understand Krishna and to get Krishna. *sarva-dharmān parityajya mām ekaṁ śaraṇaṁ vraja*, “Give up all varieties of dharma, occupations, and just surrender unto me.” This is the last instruction

Krishna gave. Is it possible to give up all varieties of dharma and just surrender unto Krishna? It is very easy to say. We all say this when we go out to preach, “Hey, Krishna has said in the *Bhagavad-gītā*, *sarva-dharmān parityajya mām ekaṁ śaraṇaṁ vraja* — “Give up all varieties of dharma and just surrender unto me.” You say it, he says it, I say it, everybody says it, but are you really surrendered yourself, or are you only speaking from the lips? How will it be effective if you speak from the lips only? If you are not surrendered yourself you can go on speaking for thousands of lives, still your preaching will never be successful. It will never be effective because you are not really surrendered yourself. So how can one be surrendered? *man-manā bhava*, Krishna says, “Think of me always, day and night. Only keep me in your mind twenty-four hours a day. No other thoughts should be there. Drive out all other thoughts from your mind.” But how will it be? Is it easy? Are you thinking of Krishna? *suta mita ramaṇi ra cinta* — “The mind is thinking of his wife, thinking of his son, his daughter, his so-called friend.” Is the stupid mind thinking of Krishna? No! Why is it not thinking of Krishna, why is it thinking of his wife, son, daughter or friend? Because he has developed some love and affection towards this material body, and bodily relations, wife, son, daughter, friend, etc. In other words, he has put his body and bodily relations on the platform of love. He has not put Krishna on the platform of love, so how can the stupid mind think of Krishna? Without love it is not at all possible to always think of Krishna, *man-manā bhava*, or to surrender, because it is based on love. Surrender, *śaraṇāgati*, is based on love.

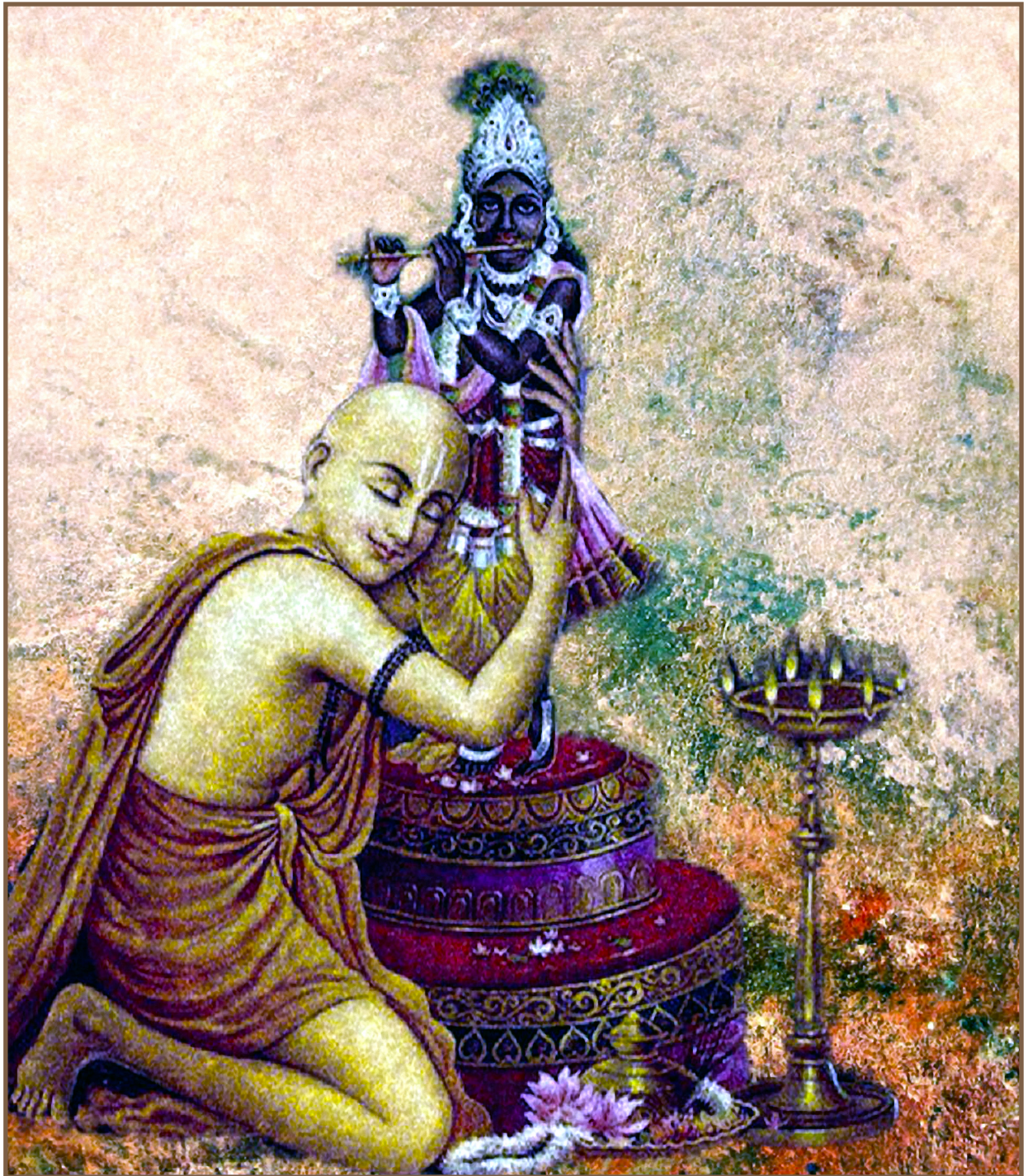
Significance of the Word “Vraja”

Sarva-dharmān parityajya mām ekaṁ śaraṇaṁ vraja. This word “*vraja*” is very significant. If you see Srila Prabhupada’s translation of the *Gītā*, he has given the word for word meaning. And what meaning has he given for *vraja*? “Go” or “surrender”. But it has a very deep purport to it. The *ācāryas* say “*vraja*” here means *vraja prema* — the *prema*, or love available in Vrajabhumi, Vrindavan, Krishna’s abode. Krishna talks about that *prema*. Without that *prema* there is no question of true surrender or complete surrender. So without that *prema* your so-called surrender is either artificial, partial or conditional, not true and not complete.

Unknown photographer: Wikipedia.



Ancient banyan tree at the place in Kurukshetra where Sri Krishna spoke the Bhagavad-gītā



Unknown artist.

Krishna came as Sri Chaitanya Mahaprabhu to show a practical example of what it means to be a devotee

Krishna has said this, but only theoretically. Then he wound up his *lilā* and went back to his abode Goloka Vrindavan, where he thought, “O, I said everything and gave confidential, more confidential and the most confidential instruction through Arjuna to all of mankind, but how many can understand it?” It is not easy to understand, because it is to be understood in *tattva*, in truth. Krishna said it is to be understood in *tattva*.

Practical Example Needed

Krishna thinks, “How can they develop Krishna consciousness? How can they understand me? How can they see me and keep me in their mind? How can they serve me and how can they surrender unto me? It is not easy,” Krishna thinks, “I have said all these things theoretically, but I have not demonstrated practically how to surrender. So I have to go again.” Therefore, he

came again in the form of Chaitanya Mahaprabhu.

Krishna thinks like this, “I have not given *prema-bhakti*, yet many, many, innumerable *yugas* have gone past.” *bhakti vinā jagatera nāhi avasthāna* — “Without this *prema-bhakti* this existence is useless. So I will go and establish the *yuga-dharma* of *nāma-saṅkīrtana*; *hare kṛṣṇa hare kṛṣṇa kṛṣṇa hare hare hare rama hare rama rama rama hare hare*.” *cāri bhāva-bhakti diyā nācāmu bhuvana*. Krishna says *cāri* — four. He never says five. There are five chief mellows in a relationship with Krishna: *śanta*, *dāsyā*, *sakhya*, *vātsalya* and *mādhurya*, but when Krishna comes as Mahaprabhu he discards *śanta-rasa*. Therefore, Krishna says *cari bhava-bhakti diyā nācāmu bhuvana*:

“I will make the whole world dance and chant *hare kṛṣṇa*.” That means chanting purely. If you have developed pure love for Krishna and you develop that *bhāva*, that loving mood, then if you chant, automatically you will dance. My Guru Maharaja, Srila Prabhupada, says, “Everybody can take part, even a dog can take part, because it is *jīva-dharma* — the *dharma* of the soul. So even a dog can take part. When Mahaprabhu came he made the jungle animals dance. On his way to Vrindavan he was passing through the jungle of Jharikhand chanting *hare kṛṣṇa*, and he made the animals chant. Tigers, lions, deer, dogs and hogs all chanted *hare kṛṣṇa* and danced. Only Mahaprabhu can do such a thing because he is the Supreme Personality of Godhead. He has come here to give that *prema*. Gaurāṅga Mahaprabhu is known as *prema puruṣottama*, the Supreme Personality of Godhead who gives love of Godhead. Krishna is known as *līlā puruṣottama*, who manifests all varieties of *līlā*,

“*Sarva-dharmān parityajya mām ekaṁ śaraṇam vraja*. This word '*vraja*' is very significant. it has a very deep purport to it. The word '*vraja*' here means *vraja prema* — the *prema*, or love available in Vrjabhumi, Vrindavan. Without that *prema* there is no question of true surrender or complete surrender. Without that *prema* your so-called surrender is either artificial, partial or conditional, not true and not complete.”

श्रीकृष्णकथामृत बिन्दु

but Mahaprabhu is known as *prema puruṣottama* and therefore he says *cāri bhava-bhakti diyā nācāmu bhuvana* — “I will make the whole world dance in the four mellows of *bhakti*; *dāsyā*, *sakhya*, *vātsalya* and *mādhurya*.” So that is what he did. *āpana karimu bhakta-bhāva arigikāre* — “I will go and assume the mood of a *bhakta* — a devotee. Not the mood of *bhagavān*.” That is Gaurā's mood. Although He is Krishna, *bhagavān*, his mood is different. That is *bhakta-bhāva*, the mood of a devotee, especially the mood of Radharani, *rādhā-bhāva*. *āpani ācari' bhakti śikhaimu sabāra* — “I will teach *bhakti* by practicing it myself.” Because unless one practices himself, he cannot teach. Unless one observes it in his own life, how can he teach? If it is

only theoretical, there will be no effect at all. It will be like blank fire — without effect.

*āpane nā kaile dharma śikhāna nā yāya
ei ta' siddhānta gītā-bhāgavate gāya* (Cc. ādi 3.21)

“Unless one practices devotional service himself, he cannot teach it to others. This is the conclusion drawn in *Bhagavad-gītā* and *Bhāgavatam*.” So Krishna came in the form of Mahaprabhu, as a practical teacher, to teach us how to develop *prema*, love, and how to cry for Krishna, how to think of Krishna day and night, twenty-four hours, and how to surrender unto Krishna.

Prabodhananda Saraswatipad has said in his *Caitanya-candrāmṛta*, “I pay my obeisances unto that Gaurā who gives *prema* through chanting the holy name; *hare kṛṣṇa hare kṛṣṇa kṛṣṇa hare hare hare rāma hare rāma rāma rāma hare hare*.” The chief result of chanting the holy name is *prema*, love of Godhead. *Niraparādhe nāma loile paye prema dhana* — “If your chanting is offenseless, pure, you will get *prema*,” So Mahaprabhu gives *prema*

through that chanting. If you get Mahaprabhu's mercy and the mercy of the holy name, *nāma-kṛpā*, you can develop *prema*. Otherwise, you will never develop *prema*. *Bhakti vinā jagatera nāhi avasthāna* — "Without this *prema-bhakti*, all existence is useless," because this *prema* is the basis of the world, the basis of all existence.

Krishna was thinking like that, and thus Krishna came in the form of Mahaprabhu, to give *prema* and to practically teach us *śaraṇāgati* and how to think of Krishna always, *man-manā bhava*. It is all there in the *Gītā*. Krishna has said everything, but theoretically, whereas Mahaprabhu teaches practically. But do you think Krishna has not spoken about *prema* in the *Bhagavad-gītā*? Krishna has spoken about it, but only theoretically. That is *man-manā bhava mad-bhakto*. This

is what we are saying and all our *ācāryas* have said it. Without love you cannot become *dāsa*, a servant. Otherwise, without such love you will become a pretender. You are just pretending that, "I am serving. I am Krishna's servant." But you cannot truly be *dāsa*, a servant, because this service is based on *prema*. In this way Krishna has spoken about this *prema*.

Arjuna is the Calf

There are seven hundred verses in the *Bhagavad-gītā*, it is the essence of all the Vedas and Upanishads.

*sarvopaniṣado gāvo dogdhā gopala-nandanah
pārtho vatsaḥ su-dhīr bhoktā dugdham gītāmṛtaṁ mahat
(Gītā-māhātmya 6)*



Unknown artist.



Krishna took the role of Arjuna's chariot driver during the battle of Kurukshetra

“This *Gītapaniṣad*, *Bhagavad-gītā*, is the essence of all the *Upanishads*, and it is just like a cow. And Lord Krishna, who is famous as a cowherd boy, is milking this cow. Arjuna is just like a calf and learned scholars and pure devotees are to drink the nectarean milk of *Bhagavad-gītā*.” There are many *Upanishads*, of which 108 are famous. The *Upanishads* are the topmost portion of the Vedas, and they have become the cow. But without a calf, the cow cannot give milk. Arjuna is the calf, *pārtho vatsaḥ*, and who is the milkman? That is Gopal-nandana, that means Nanda-nandana, the son of Nanda Maharaja, that is Krishna. So Krishna is the milkman, Gopal-nandana, and he milks the cow — all the *Upanishads*. Then this transcendental nectarean milk, *āmṛtam*, in the form of *Bhagavad-gītā*, came out. And for whom? *su-dhīr bhoktā* — for those who are very anxious to taste it and have it. For those who have developed greed for it, this *āmṛta* came. But people these days are very anxious and eager to drink liquor. They advertise: “COLD WINE, LIQUOR! Open 24 hours. Come, drink, dance and dine!” This is going on in the Western world. So many people are after that! But how many are

coming to drink this nectar? Put up a very big sign board; “DRINK THIS NECTAR — *GĪTĀMṚTA!*” We are giving such sweet nectarean mellow, *amṛta*, free of cost. You are paying so many dollars there, but here, no money is required, it is free of cost. But nobody will come because they have not developed a taste for it. So it says, *su-dhīr bhoktā*, it is given for those who have developed taste for it. As the calf sucks the udder of the cow, he drinks milk, so for such interested persons that have developed taste for it, it is there. So the milkman is Krishna and *pārtha*, Arjuna, is *vatsa*, the calf, and he drank it. But he was not selfish, he gave it to all others: “You drink, you drink.”

It is said that the Vedas have come out from the breathing of the Lord, but *Bhagavad-gītā* has come directly from the lips of the Lord. So this *Upanishad*, which is known as *Gītapaniṣad*, is better than the Vedas. The *Upanishads* are the topmost portion of the Vedas, and this *Bhagavad-gītā* is the *amṛta*, the nectarean essence, so how can one think that Krishna has not spoken about *prema* here? He has spoken everything. 🍊

— From a lecture in Baltimore, USA. On 1 June 1993.

STORY OF THE GITA PANDA

Bhurijana Das



*ananyās cintayanto mām ye janāḥ paryupāsate
teṣāṁ nityābhiyuktānām yoga-kṣemaṁ vahāmy aham*

But those who always worship me with exclusive devotion, meditating on my transcendental form — to them I carry what they lack, and preserve what they have. (Bg. 9.22)

When the Brahmin, Arjunacharya, was writing his commentary on the *Gītā*, he saw this verse and thought it a mistake to believe that the Lord would personally carry whatever was needed to each devotee. Arjunacharya therefore scratched out *vahāmi* (I carry) and inserted *karomi* (I have it done). Arjunacharya was extremely poor. After making the change in the text, he, as he did every day, went out begging.

While he was gone, his wife heard a knock at the door. Two beautiful boys fearfully insisted that she quickly accept the food that her husband had forced them to bring. These beautiful boys were anxious to get away from her house because, they told her, the great Brahmin scholar, Arjunacharya, would probably beat them again. When Arjunacharya's wife expressed disbelief that her husband had beaten such boys, one said, "See?" And the dark boy turned to show her the marks on his back where he had been struck. Then they both dashed away.

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Unknown photographer

*Deity of Krishna's universal form at the
Changu Narayan temple in Nepal*

Arjunacharya's wife was bewildered, and she began to cook and eat the food the boys had brought. Upon Arjunacharya's return, he saw his wife eating. He was shocked. According to the Vedic system, a wife never eats before she has fed her husband.

When he challenged her, she replied, "Ācārya, why have you acted so inappropriately and become so cruel?" She then told him that two beautiful boys had come, left a bountiful supply of food, and after the dark boy had showed her the marks on his back, they had rushed away. The ācārya thought for a few moments and then asked what the boys looked like. Upon hearing that one had a beautiful darkish complexion and that the other was white, he could understand that his fortunate wife had been blessed with the *darśana* of Krishna and Balaram. The "beating" marks on the beautiful dark boy's back were the result of the ācārya's having scratched out the word *vahāmi*. Krishna had been forced to come personally to prove the truth of his words, "I carry what they lack." 🍌

— From *Surrender Unto Me*, by Bhurijana Das. Published by Warren Weinstein, 1997.